AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the first paragraph on page 12 of the instant application with the following amended paragraph:

It should be noted that other physical connections for the back channel may also be used--such as a shelf software loop (i.e., software that controls some or all of the interactions between XCVR 'B' and XCVR 'A') which can interrogate both XCVR `B` and XCVR `A`. The back channel may also be implemented using a physically separate route from receiver to transmitter (either within the same media carrying the information from the transmitter to receiver, or through any other pathway including a software link that can be running above the current protocol), or as is the case in this invention, be placed within the bi-directional data-path that already exists. The present embodiment utilizes the existing bi-directional user paths to form the back channel and does so without impact to, or serious degradation of the user data bandwidth. In this regard, in one aspect, the present invention details how the back channel information is encoded and decoded without interrupting, or seriously degrading the user data flow.

Please replace the paragraphs starting on page 1, second paragraph, with the following amended paragraphs:

This application is related to U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/313,454, entitled "Transceiver System for High Speed Digital Signaling", filed Aug. 20, 2001 ~~(Docket No. 13764.2-US-P1)~~; U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/313,455, entitled "Automatic Slicer Level Adaption", filed Aug. 20, 2001 ~~(Docket No. 13764.3-US-P2)~~; U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/313,478, entitled "Variable Delay FIR Equalizer for Serial Baseband

Communications", filed Aug. 20, 2001 ~~(Docket No. 13764.5-US-P1)~~; U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/313,477, entitled "Crosstalk Management for High-Speed Signaling Links", filed Aug. 20, 2001 ~~(Docket No. 13764.6-US-P1)~~; and U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/313,476, entitled "Method and Apparatus for Encoding and Decoding Digital Communications Data", filed Aug. 20, 2001 ~~(Docket No. 13764.7-US-P1)~~. All of these provisional applications are hereby incorporated herein by reference.

This application is also related to non-provisional patent applications that claim priority to one or more of the above-referenced provisional patent applications. These non-provisional patent applications are U.S. Pat. App. No. 10/414,951, entitled "System and Method for High Speed Digital Signaling", filed Aug. 16, 2002 ~~(Docket No. 209.001-US)~~; U.S. Pat. App. No. 10/222,073, entitled "System and Method for Slicer Level Adaption", filed Aug. 16, 2002 ~~(Docket No. 209.002-US)~~; U.S. Pat. App. No. 10/222,166, entitled "System and Method for Providing Variable Delay FIR Equalizer for Serial Baseband Communications", filed Aug. 16, 2002 ~~(Docket No. 209.004-US)~~; U.S. Pat. App. No. 10/222,072, entitled "System and Method for Providing Crosstalk Management for High-Speed Signaling Links", filed Aug. 16, 2002 ~~(Docket No. 209.005-US)~~; and U.S. Pat. App. No. 10/222,254, entitled "Method and Apparatus for Encoding and Decoding Digital Communications Data", filed Aug. 16, 2002 ~~(Docket No. 209.006)~~. The aforementioned non-provisional patent applications are hereby incorporated by reference, in their entirety, herein.

Please replace the first paragraph on page 10 with the following amended paragraph:

It should be noted that the Auto-Negotiation protocol is described in detail in U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/313,454, entitled "Transceiver System for High Speed Digital Signaling", filed Aug. 20, 2001 ~~(Docket No. 13764.2-US-P1)~~ and non-provisional patent application 10/414,951, entitled "System and Method for High Speed Digital Signaling", filed Aug. 16, 2002 ~~(Docket No. 209.001-US)~~. As mentioned above, these applications are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

Please replace the first paragraph on page 20 with the following amended paragraph:

In one embodiment, the case of RDS balancing codes with a decimal code between two and eighty inclusive, the selection of which coded representation to send is based upon driving the RDS to zero, as is described in U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/313,476, entitled "Method and Apparatus for Encoding and Decoding Digital Communications Data", filed Aug. 20, 2001 ~~(Docket Number 13764.7-US-P1)~~ and U.S. Patent Application 10/222,254, entitled "Method and Apparatus for Encoding and Decoding Digital Communications Data", filed Aug. 16, 2002 ~~(Docket No. 209.006-US)~~.